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Support Mobility Plan 2035 for safe & sustainable streets! CF#15-0719

1 message

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Dear Honorable Councilmembers:

I support adopting the Mobility Plan 2035, including ALL of its proposed networks. As a bike rider, transit user, driver, and pedestrian, I strongly support this Plan because I believe that it will help make L.A. streets better for all of us walking, biking, taking transit and driving.

A well-connected network of protected bike lanes and other complete streets improvements the Plan includes will give people healthier options to get around our neighborhoods and our whole city. Calmer traffic and safer streets are critical to protect and enhance our quality of life. We need this plan to build on the progress made by the 2010 Bicycle Plan and make all modes of transportation work together for our city. The modal networks in the Plan were carefully crafted to balance the needs of all who will use them. We can't afford to piecemeal them to appease local naysayers without undermining their citywide utility.

I have lived in Westwood near the intersection of Westwood and Santa Monica for nearly a decade. About four years ago I was working in Santa Monica, and transitioned to riding a bike a couple of days a week just to give myself a break from the traffic. Back then, my bike lanes ended at Centinela on Broadway, and I remember how happy I was to see them extended along Ohio almost up to Santa Monica. That's better, but there was still nearly half of my commute that was without infrastructure, and it took me a long time to feel comfortable riding on Santa Monica Blvd. In the meantime, I found that riding my bike helped me get in much better shape, saved me money, and made me actually look forward to my commute rather than dread it.

I still live in Westwood, but now I commute to Mid-City, near the corner of Wilshire and La Jolla. Again, my bike lanes end before Avenue of the Stars and don't pick up again until Rexford, when S. Santa Monica turns into Burton Way. I realize a lot of this is up to the city of Beverly Hills and as such has nothing to do with the LA Mobility Plan, but I also do not have any other options short of going all the way south to Venice, to have bike lanes. Even then, I don't any north/south routes to get to Venice that have bike lanes, so it's time to duke it out with the drivers on Santa Monica.

Similarly, my wife occasionally commutes by bike from Westwood to her job in Hollywood near the corner of Hollywood and Sycamore. Again, it's just spotty coverage. Bike lanes on Santa Monica for a portion of it, then nothing from King's Road until we arrive at her work. We also have realized that taking the Expo Line to downtown is much, much better than driving there, dealing with traffic, and searching for parking. Right now, that means riding an infrastructure-less Westwood. Both my wife and I, and I am sure the many, many people I see biking up to UCLA, have had to deal with repeated bouts of abuse and dangerously close passes from impatient drivers on Westwood.

We're both somewhat comfortable riding in traffic, despite the close passes, honks, and yells we sometimes get from people who don't want to share the road with us. Most people I know are not. I have never had anyone at work tell me they can't commute by bike. Many, however, have told me that they really want to, but there's no safe route. I could tell them until I'm blue in the face about their legal right to control a lane and to ignore the few drivers who are abusively impatient, but they won't feel comfortable doing it until they feel like they have a safe space on the road that gets them where they're going.

It is **vital** that we have a network of safe routes. I can't tell you how much I would love to be able to have bike lanes along my entire route. I **can** tell you how many people have told me that they want to commute by bike but do not feel safe without bike lanes. The Mobility Plan, as it stands, is the key to helping those people feel

like it's a real possibility, like they're not putting their lives in jeopardy by not driving. Bike lanes, and other traffic calming measures, are proven to not only improve the safety of cyclists, but of all road users. For every street someone claims is unsafe (like people say about Westwood), shouldn't the default answer be to change it to make it safer? Doing nothing seems negligent at best!

Please approve the Mobility Plan 2035 with no changes so that we can all travel safely on the streets of L.A.

Sincerely,

Brian Nilsen
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